

**FINAL REPORT
COVER SHEET**

1. Grant number: 90CT0063/01,02,03: Training of Child Welfare Practitioners to Work Effectively with Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care through the Federal Independent Living Program (ILP).

NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON CHILD
ABUSE AND NEGLECT INFORMATION

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Academy for Professional Excellence
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3. Telephone Number: (619) 594-3546
4. Project Title: STAR: Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness
5. Period of Performance: September 30, 2000-September 29, 2003
6. Approved Project Period: October 1, 2000 thru September 30, 2003
7. Period Covered by Report: (Check One)
First Semi-Annual Report ☐
Second Semi-Annual Report ☒ X
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10. Date of Report: December 13, 2003

11. Report Number: 6

12. Name of Federal Project Officer: Pamela Johnson

13. Date Reviewed by Federal Project Officer: _____

14. Comments, (if any):

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NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON CHILD
ABUSE AND NEGLECT INFORMATION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background information: Describe the problem the project is addressing and the expected impact of the project on participants and/or the community.

The picture in the State of California regarding youth emancipating from foster care is challenging. In 1998-1999 data collected on a statewide basis by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) showed less than half of eligible youth actually received Independent Living services. The Southern California Region's track record in providing IL services portrays a more challenging picture still. The 1998-1999 data for five Southern California counties shows that only 16% of the total eligible youth actually received services (L. Humphrey, personal communication, 2000). Details are provided in Table 1:

Table 1
Number of Eligible Youth Receiving Services

	Imperial County	Orange County	San Diego County	San Bernardino County	Riverside County
Youth <i>Eligible</i>	90	631	1640	1272	694
Youth <i>Offered</i>	17	801	1134	1305	1839
Youth who <i>Received ILP</i>	3	82	117	455	36

This is limited data, and the reasons for discrepancy in numbers may have multiple explanations. However, the data vividly portrays the need for training, to positively impact compliance in providing needed IL services to Southern California youth.

In May of 1998, CDSS convened a Strategic Planning Group for the Independent Living Plan whose membership includes public, private, profit and non-profit stakeholders to address this problem. It was facilitated by the National Research Center for Youth Development. They carved out a definition of the problem, identified methods to successfully emancipating foster youth into adulthood, and –among other things– identified the gaps in public child welfare practice. One of their key recommendations is to ensure comprehensive competency-based trainings on ILP for California's public child welfare staff AND for providers.

Despite the fact that every year, thousands of young people leave the foster care system for life on their own, far too little attention has been paid to what it takes to ensure that these youth become successful adults. Statistics about youth that have emancipated from foster care are woefully inadequate. Recent studies in Wisconsin indicate that within 12-18 months of emancipation an alarming number of former foster youth experience homelessness (12%), housing instability (22%) or other economic deprivation, including lack or loss of employment (50%) and dependence of public assistance (32%); do not have access to needed health and social services (approximately 44%); and become incarcerated (27% of males)(Courtney and Piliavin, 1998). Earlier studies and anecdotal information from many other states and counties make it clear that these findings are representative of the experiences of former foster youth throughout the country (Westat, 1991; Barth 1990; Homes for the Homeless, 1998). At all levels, child welfare policy-makers are

exploring ways to ensure that the outcomes for these children improve. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Title IV-E Executive Summary outlines both the gaps and the challenges in provision of services to help youth prepare for the transition from living within the child welfare system to adult self-sufficiency, and provides a comprehensive set of recommendations from the Independent Living Program nationwide (Montoya, 1999).

Far too often, the system itself creates roadblocks to natural development of the skills required for independence. In the interest of ensuring children's safety, care and supervision, case plans and foster home regulations often inadvertently restrict foster youth from activities such as food preparation, doing laundry or spending some time alone at home that are part of family life for other teens. Child welfare professionals need to become expert in spotting and addressing such potential barriers. They need to develop awareness of applicable community resources, and how to assist youth in finding and accessing these resources as needed. They need to recognize and work with key partners, with and on behalf of the youth, using well-developed collaboration skills. Such partners may include teachers, counselors, foster parents or group home providers, parent or other relatives, employers, clergy and community-based agencies.

2. Program model: summarize the project components including services, activities and training delivered and the target population(s) for each component.

Program Objective 1. *A competency-based training curriculum will be developed that reflects the wisdom learned from research, best practice, foster youth experience and evaluation.*

A comprehensive, competency-based curriculum and training program was developed and delivered to interdisciplinary personnel whose focus includes adolescent foster youth. The competencies upon which the Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness (STAR) curriculum was based were gathered from the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), the Institute for Human Services (IHS), and STAR IL Competencies developed during the first year of the project. STAR IL Competencies were developed based on: the grant's goals and objectives, research of the literature of Independent Living Programs and emerging promising practices, and results of the focus groups.

A literature review/resource collection was conducted during the first year of the project. Information gathered assisted with curriculum development materials. In addition, a total of nine focus groups were conducted during the first year. This activity was conducted in partnership with Casey Family Program Staff. The goal of the focus groups was to gather information from stakeholders regarding training needs. The target population for the focus groups was: child welfare professionals and caregivers (foster/kin parents, foster family agencies, and group home staff), ILP providers, educators, current and former foster youth, tribal child welfare professionals and caregivers, and biological parents. Approximately 80 individuals participated overall.

Three training programs were developed. An overview of the objective, target group and topic areas is provided in *Attachment A*.

Program Objective 2. *Multi-disciplinary training teams will deliver training to multi-disciplinary audiences.*

A diverse training team was gathered to facilitate STAR Training. During the course of the project, over 12 trainers were used. Diversity in both ethnicity and profession was inherent in STAR Training. STAR Trainers ethnicity included the following: Native American, Black, Asian American, White, and Hispanic. Professions represented included: social worker, group home administrator, educator, community-based organization staff, foster family agency staff, and foster parent educator.

Training was provided throughout the State of California. In all, 15 training sessions were provided. This includes: 1 Service Provider Pilot, 2 Training for Trainers Pilot's, 5 Training for Service Providers, 1 Training for Managers and Supervisors, and 6 Training for Trainers. Over 500 interdisciplinary personnel throughout the State received STAR Interdisciplinary Training. A breakdown of training sessions provided and participants is included in *Attachment B*.

Program Objective 3. *Minorities, and particularly the Native American community, will be specifically targeted for inclusion as trainees, trainers and advisors.*

The STAR Advisory Group, which consisted of a diverse group of interdisciplinary stakeholders, provided an essential role in the identification of interdisciplinary stakeholders throughout the State. An administrator from both the Southern Indian Health Council and Indian Health Services were Advisory Board members. They provided guidance on project development, including the curriculum and training delivery.

In addition, our trainee population was ethnically diverse. Table 2 describes the ethnicity of those training participants that completed both a pre and post-test.

Table 2
Percentage of Ethnic Representation at STAR Trainings

	<i>Training for Service Providers</i>	<i>Training for Managers and Supervisors</i>	<i>Training for Trainers</i>
African-American	19.0	7.1	24.4
White	44.4	67.8	52.9
Hispanic	17.6	7.1	14.3
Asian	7.0	14.3	0.8
Other	12.0	3.6	2.5
Left blank	0.0	0.0	5.2

Program Objective 4. *The curriculum will be widely disseminated throughout the State of California and beyond, via the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) to the Title IV-E Programs, the four other California Regional PCWTA's, Casey Family Programs, the National Resource Center for Youth Development, and other organizations.*

Focus on dissemination was primary during the third year of the project. As previously mentioned, 6 Training for Trainers were offered throughout the State of California. Over 130 interdisciplinary trainees received comprehensive training on how to facilitate STAR in their region. These participants also received the entire STAR Training Package, which includes: trainer & participant

versions, PowerPoint presentations, posters, youth digital video stories and additional resources for the Training for Service Providers and Training for Managers and Supervisors.

Dissemination also occurred by way of numerous presentations and conference workshops which include: Governor's Task Force on Homelessness, California Department of Social Services Managers, CalSWEC/Regional Training Academies, Casey Family Programs Community Services Board, National Independent Living Conference, and the National Staff Development and Training Association Conference.

The complete STAR Training Package has been posted to the Web at: <http://pcwta.sdsu.edu>. A mailing list was gathered that includes over 8500 nationwide Independent Living stakeholders. A postcard announcement was mailed to these stakeholders, notifying them of STAR Training on the Web.

In addition, a 5 minute STAR Informational Video was developed. This video briefly describes the goal of STAR Training, topic areas covered, and testimonials from actual STAR Training participants. This video features footage from actual STAR Trainings, including Teen Town, an experiential learning experience. This informational video, along with STAR materials was mailed to hundreds of Independent Living stakeholders nationwide.

Finally, the entire STAR Training package was provided to the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) to the Title IV-E Programs, the four other California Regional Public Child Welfare Agencies (PCWTA's), Casey Family Programs, the National Resource Center for Youth Development, and other organizations.

Program Objective 5. *Collaborative relationships among partner agencies will be developed and/or strengthened.*

While primary responsibility for development of the curriculum rested with project staff from the Academy for Professional Excellence, a project of the San Diego State University School of Social Work, the STAR Project was a collaborative effort among key partners. Consultants from various entities, including Casey Family Programs, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, the Southern Indian Health Council, and the California Community College Foundation were involved in content development. An Advisory Group, which included the consultants names above and the San Diego's Children's Initiative, a local group home, foster parents, former foster youth, Community College Personnel, a Juvenile Court Attorney, a Juvenile Court Judge, met on a bi-monthly (for the first half of the project) and quarterly (for the second half of the project). The STAR Advisory Group not only provided an essential function as advisors and community stakeholders, but also assisted with the creation of supportive networks in which to conduct the STAR Training.

Finally, STAR Interdisciplinary Training was successful at bringing a diverse group of Independent Living stakeholders together. This resulted in the strengthening of collaborative relationships throughout the State. A STAR trainee's testimonial directly attests to this:

"Following the STAR Training...I scheduled Emancipation Services Collaboration meetings to sustain the connections that were made in the training. Attending these training opportunities together has solidified the relationship that Emancipation Services has been cultivating over the

*last two years with its community partners and the Court.” – Bob Malmberg, Orange County
Emancipation Services Manager*

Program Objective 6. *The curriculum will be integrated into the statewide plan to create a distance learning training option.*

In an effort to increase the competence of child welfare workers by using technology to maximize the availability of training, the entire STAR Training Package has been posted to the Web. Those seeking a comprehensive, competency-based, interdisciplinary training program will be pleased to have access to the STAR Curricula, FREE of charge. Through the use of such technology, the Academy will make the availability of training less dependent on geography and funding availability.

In addition to the aforementioned stated objectives and accomplishments, it should be noted that a Resource Fair was integrated into the STAR Interdisciplinary Training for Service Providers. The resources provided were representative of applicable local, regional and statewide resources available to those responsible for preparing adolescent foster youth for adulthood.

Several facilitators to attaining the project objectives were noted during the project's implementation. The main facilitators include: an existing framework within the Academy for Professional Excellence to develop and facilitate training and professional development, involvement with an established Statewide collaborative of training academies, a supportive Advisory Group, established rapport between project staff and Statewide child welfare leaders and a strong partnership with a highly regarded School of Social Work. Due to efforts to train an interdisciplinary group on a regional level, it was necessary to gather a comprehensive listing of interdisciplinary representatives in each community. This proved to be a task requiring a significant amount of time, detail work and outreach. We found that many communities did not have organized collaborative groups and it was, therefore, somewhat challenging to gather comprehensive community information. However, this potential barrier was overcome, as is evident by the number of trainees that participated in every STAR Training.

3. Collaborative efforts (if relevant): the agencies/organizations participating in the collaboration and their roles and responsibilities

As previously mentioned, five key partners collaborated on the project. They each played a unique and essential role in the successful implementation of the project. Some of their key responsibilities included:

Casey Family Programs assisted with research, focus groups, curriculum content development, participation on training team, and the Advisory Group. Casey was also a funding partner during the first and second year of the project.

San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) participated on the Advisory Group, provided information needed to interview 128 foster youth, and provided participants to take part in the training.

Southern Indian Health Council (SIHC) participated as members of the Advisory Group and took part in STAR Training.

Community College Foundation (Grossmont College Foster and Kinship Care Education) participated on the Advisory Group, provided staff assistance at trainings, and provided trainers.

The Children's Initiative participated on the Advisory Group.

As part of the Academy for Professional Excellence, the STAR Project had access to a collaborative network of statewide child welfare training academies. As a result of this collaborative effort, STAR Training was offered, on a regional basis, throughout the State of California. The Regional Training Academies provided references to local stakeholders and also provided gratis training sites and logistical assistance.

Finally, due to the interdisciplinary nature of STAR Training, many agencies were called upon to take part in planning, coordination and implementation of STAR Training. These efforts not only paved the way for STAR in each region, but also created an opportunity for communities to take ownership of the STAR Training process.

4. Special issues: issues considered by the project to be unique or relevant to their program, such as agency or staff characteristics, community characteristics, characteristics of the target population.

The interdisciplinary focus of the STAR Training was a unique and critical component. Despite the fact that every year, thousands of young people leave the foster care system for life on their own, far too little attention has been paid to what it takes to ensure that these youth become successful adults. It is the responsibility of all providers to ensure that foster youth make the transition to adulthood successfully. STAR Training brought stakeholders involved in providing services and care for foster youth together. Although these training sessions were provided on a regional and sometimes countywide basis, for some, this was the first time they had met. The ironic fact is that they all provide services to the same group of youth, and yet, most had never met, nonetheless participated in an interactive training that challenged them to collaborate in order to provide comprehensive services to the youth.

Another unique aspect of the project is that three levels of training were provided: Training for Service Providers (those involved in providing direct services), Training for Managers and Supervisors (those involved in larger policy and programmatic considerations) and Training for Trainers (those providing training to interdisciplinary stakeholders).

The creation of Teen Town provided an innovative and experiential training opportunity for the participants. Teen Town was a 3-hour simulation city. Individual "lives" were developed-enough for each participant to choose a "life" other than their own. Through this experience, participants were able to walk a mile in the shoes of someone else in the foster care system. Teen Town consisted of many stations (including: community clinic, store, courthouse, high school) and homes (including group and foster homes). The experience of Teen Town facilitated the breakdown of stereotypes and caused participants to 'step back' and reevaluate the foster care system. Teen Town is written into the first of 3 days of Training for Service Providers. It was recognized that for logistical (significant set-up required) and budgetary (purchasing extensive props) reasons, future STAR trainers may not be able to effectively produce Teen Town. Therefore, Teen Time was created as an optional activity. Whereas Teen Town must have a minimum of 54 participants, Teen Time can be facilitated with as few as 5. Teen Time also requires small-scale props and set-up time.

The STAR Training curricula (both the Training for Service Providers and Training for Managers and Supervisors) contains numerous activities. Many of the activities have options created for alternative ways in which to conduct the activities. This provides the trainer with extensive opportunities for specializing the curricula to the needs of the trainees.

5. Funding information: duration of funding, funding initiative, and total project funds.

The duration of funding was September 30, 2000-September 29, 2003. The funding initiative was #90CT0063/01,02,03 as a discretionary grant through the Administration of Children, Youth and Families. Total funds for the project were \$495,988.00.

6. Overview of methodology: brief description of evaluation plan and overview of data collection methods and analyses; type of evaluator(s) (in-house or third party) and extent of evaluator's involvement with the project.

As planned, the evaluation was to have four-levels as defined by Kirkpatrick (1994). The evaluation was to collect data at the reaction, learning, results, and impact levels. Each level is an advance upon the former in demonstrating training impact. However, we were limited to completing three of the levels because of time, budget, and practical considerations. We completed a needs assessment for curriculum development as part of the level 4 evaluation. We had intended in year 3 of the grant to re-interview youth who participated in the needs assessment, but we found that the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) records were not useful in helping us locate youth for the proposed follow-up. Therefore the evaluation is limited to 3 levels.

A customer satisfaction tool, routinely administered in training sessions offered by the Academy for Professional Excellence (Academy) was utilized in this project for the level one evaluation. The Academy evaluation tool utilizes a Likert scale format along with trainee written comments and recommendations regarding the training/trainer. The tool measures trainees' assessments of the effectiveness of the trainings in several domains. These data were tabulated and reviewed by the trainers, evaluators, and the Academy. This evaluation assures that training presentations are of quality and meet trainee needs.

The level 2 evaluation focused on knowledge acquisition. Pre and post-tests were developed by the evaluator based on reviews of the literature, and key input from subject content experts, the trainers, and the Advisory Board. The instrument had three parts:

- (1). A multiple choice test that assessed subject's knowledge.
- (2). A response to a case vignette that allowed us to qualitatively assess a trainees Independent living services (ILS) practice.
- (3). Trainees assessed their ability to perform the ILS competencies on a Likert scale.

The review of the Level 2 instrument by experts and trainers allowed us to determine if the measure had face validity. The test measures the extent to which knowledge is acquired as a result of the training. The instruments were field-tested by administering them in the first training. Results were analyzed, and an item and reliability analysis was conducted with these data. The reliability of the knowledge test was low ($\alpha=.50$), but the self-assessment of the competencies yielded a higher alpha that was well within acceptable ranges ($\alpha=.75$). The initial instrument not only had

low reliability, but the trainers felt the instrument did not really capture what they were teaching. The instruments were revised based on the statistical item analysis and trainer comment. The reworked instrument knowledge test that was used in the remaining trainings provided a somewhat more acceptable alpha of .62. Level 2 instruments were administered to trainees at the beginning and end of each training series.

The instrument was given to 4 training cohorts consisting of line workers, residential care workers, and foster parents. It was also utilized in the separate trainings for the managers and trainers (T for T) evaluations.

Level 3 examined trainees retention of learning. Six-month follow-up was conducted to measure the extent to which the competencies have been incorporated into practice. The follow-up was conducted by phone and consisted of a self -assessment of how the training had benefited them in their ILS practice.

Findings

Level 1 Consumer Satisfaction

Table 3
Consumer Satisfaction Survey Results

Question	Range		
	High	Low	Total Mean
I think this class was excellent	6.09	5.38	5.89
Cultural differences and issues were addressed appropriately	5.89	5.49	5.75
Content was appropriate for my present skill levels	6.04	5.19	5.76
Trainer did a poor job helping participants relate the course content and knowledge to their job activities (-)	2.28	1.78	2.02
Content matched learning objectives	6.20	5.62	5.98
Content was interesting and supported with examples	6.23	5.43	5.95
Trainer did not relate issues and concepts to child welfare (-)	2.27	1.57	1.90
Trainer made effective use of allotted time	5.99	5.32	5.80
Trainer had an excellent relationship with participants, and answered questions appropriately, as well as responded to trainee issues	6.21	5.65	6.02
Trainer made poor use of presentation styles other than lecture (-)	1.71	2.29	2.02

7=strongly agree...1=strongly disagree

(-) = Interpretation of the scoring is reversed. Item is stated as a negative.

Table 4
Outcomes of the Levels 2 & 3 Evaluations

Measure	Pre-Test Mean (sd)	Post-Test Mean (sd)	Significance
Cohort 1 (N=22)			
Knowledge Test	7.28 (2.2)	7.69 (.222)	.222
Competency Assessment	16.66 (4.5)	18.93 (3.3)	.003
Cohort 2 (N=62)			
Competency Assessment	18.93 (2.7)	21.25 (3.3)	.002
Cohorts 3 & 4 (N=54)			
Knowledge Test	8.11 (2.6)	10.82 (2.2)	.0001
Competency Assessment	16.81 (3.3)	17.77 (3.4)	.138
Managers (N=26)			
Knowledge Test	8.3 (2.0)	11.73 (4.0)	.0001
Competency test	18.2 (2.9)	18.8 (2.4)	.007
Trainers (T for T) (N=101)			
Knowledge test	8.48 (2.0)	10.94 (2.4)	.0001
Competency test	15.69 (2.51)	16.4 (3.5)	.048
Six Month Follow-up (N=25)	% Agreeing	% Disagreeing	
"The Training made them more effective at delivering ILS"	100.0	0.0	
" I learned a great deal about ILS from the Star training"	92.0	8.0	
"The Star training increased the value I placed on ILS"	92.0	8.0	

II. PROCESS EVALUATION

Statement of the implementation objective: Statement of projects implementation objectives as provided in the grant application. These would include:

1. **What you planned to do** as stated in the grant application/work plan (services/interventions/training, duration and intensity of each activity)

The goal of this project was to develop and implement a training program that impacts practice and policy in public child welfare, leading ultimately to better outcomes for youth exiting foster care. Towards that end, the following objectives were outlined in our grant application:

- 1) A competency-based training curriculum will be developed that reflects the wisdom learned from research, best practice, foster youth experience, and evaluation
- 2) Training will be delivered by multi-disciplinary training teams to multi-disciplinary audiences

- 3) Minorities, and particularly the Native American community, will be specifically targeted for inclusion as trainees, trainers, and advisors
- 4) The curriculum will be widely disseminated throughout the state of California and beyond, via the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) to the Title IV-E programs, the four other California Regional PCWTA's, the Casey Family Program, the National Research Center for Youth Development, and other organizations
- 5) Collaborative relationships among partner agencies will be developed and/or strengthened
- 6) The curriculum will be integrated into the statewide plan to create a distance learning training option

2. Target population as stated in the grant application (characteristics and numbers to be reached by each project activity and description of efforts to recruit or reach population).

During the course of this project, we expected to train a total of 825 individuals in multidisciplinary groups, using ratios that maximize learning for public child welfare staff. Following a comprehensive research study, numerous focus groups, youth and stakeholder interviews, it was determined that instead of presenting a series of day long didactic trainings, it was agreed a three day training format would better equip participants with the knowledge and skills required to successfully transfer learning in order to be more effective in preparing youths for a successful transition to adulthood. The three day format focused upon highly interactive/experiential training that would include participation in Teen Town, an independent living simulation city. Originally, it was thought that a 1 day interdisciplinary training would provide participants the opportunity to take part in an effective learning experience. The increase in training days resulted in an increase in training cost and logistical considerations. Therefore, the Training for Service Providers was not offered on a Statewide basis. A request for a reallocation of funds to cover this training change was submitted and approved. This decreased the number of trainees by approximately 210. Another modification in our original plan occurred with the development of the Training for Managers and Supervisors. Due to the extensive planning and development that was required for the Training for Service Providers, the planning and development for the Training for Managers and Supervisors had to be delayed. The impacted timeline resulted in the Training for Managers and Supervisors being offered only one time, thus resulting in a decrease in anticipated trainees by approximately 140. Our actual interdisciplinary trainee group included professional representation from groups not originally accounted for. This includes: probation, mental health, community college IL staff, kinship parents, employment services personnel and others involved in preparing foster adolescents for adulthood. Information about the trainee groups is provided in Table 5:

Table 5
Interdisciplinary Training Overview

Trainee Group	Location	Type of training	# anticipated	Actual #
<i>Interdisciplinary trainees</i> (public child welfare social workers, foster parents, group home workers, school personnel, contract case managers, and former foster youth)	Southern CA	Interdisciplinary training	280	340
<i>Supervisors & Managers</i>	Southern CA	Interdisciplinary training	140 / 35	27
<i>Trainers</i>	Southern California	Training for Trainers	25	32
<i>Trainers</i>	State of California	Training for Trainers	100	108
<i>Child welfare staff, supervisors & managers</i>	State of California	Interdisciplinary Training	210	0
			790-825	507

As previously mentioned, the curriculum was disseminated to a broad audience. This included, but was not limited to: regional training academies, the eleven schools of social work in California, NRCYS, Casey Family Programs, and included notification to over 8000 independent living stakeholders. As referred to in our first semi-annual report, dated April 19, 2001, the intent to post independent living resource information on San Diego's Promise Website has changed. San Diego's Promise is now a resource for the local business community. Following review of other posting options, it was decided to post the entire STAR Training Package, including resources, to the Academy Website: <http://pcwta.sdsu.edu>. An article discussing the need for interdisciplinary training, the STAR Training model and methodology is in the process of being submitted to the Journal of Social Work Education, a professional journal published by the Council on Social Work Education.

3. Whom you planned to have do it (planned staffing arrangements and qualifications/characteristics of staff).

As stated in the STAR Project Description, staffing arrangements for the STAR Project included the following:

- Dr. Anita Harbert, Principal Investigator

Dr. Harbert has been the Director of the SDSU School of Social Work since 1979. She is also the Project Director of the PCWTA and the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Program. She also founded and directs the University Center on Substance Abuse. Dr. Harbert is a prominent social work educator. She has served on the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education for over ten years. Finally, she has extensive research and publication expertise in the areas of social policy as it relates to federal influence exerted on state and local governments

through grant-in-aid programs, gerontology and services to the aging, child welfare, substance abuse and women.

- Don Dudley, M.S.W., Co-Principal Investigator and Project Director

Mr. Dudley earned his Masters in Social Work from San Diego State University in 1969. His professional experience spans 30 years in human services, first as a child protective services worker and supervisor, staff development officer and assistant director of social services in San Joaquin and Merced Counties. He then served as assistant director of social services for San Diego County and as Director of the Kern County Department of Human Services until August of 1998. He returned to San Diego to become director of the PCWTA in September of 1998. Mr. Dudley also teaches in the SDSU School of Social Work in the areas of macro practice and social policy.

- Dr. Loring Jones, Evaluator

Dr. Jones is a Professor of Social Work, SDSU School of Social Work and Research Associate with Child and Family Research Group. He has extensive research and practice experience and has published numerous articles in the area of child welfare. He was the Evaluator on the federally funded *Project Nexus* grant, a Domestic Violence training project for Child Welfare Workers. He was the Principal Investigator of two studies which examined the impact of economic factors on child maltreatment. He is also conducting an evaluation of Child Protective Services' initial training, which includes an analog-aided investigation of risk assessment training. He is the Director of Curriculum and Evaluation for the SDSU School of Social Work Title IV-E Program.

- Irene Becker, LCSW, Curriculum and Trainer Development Coordinator

Ms. Becker serves as the Curriculum and Trainer Development Coordinator of the Public Child Welfare Training Academy, Southern Region. Prior to joining the Academy in 1997, Ms. Becker was a Training Specialist and Child Welfare Services Supervisor for San Diego County Department of Social Services. She is also currently an adjunct faculty member at the SDSU School of Social Work and teaches in the area of Child Welfare Services. Ms. Becker presented at the National Staff Development and Training Association Conferences on The Use of Games in Child Welfare Curricula and Using Distance Learning (CD-ROM) in Interviewing Children in 1998 and 1999, respectively. Her research and publication interests are in the area of Child Welfare Services and she co-authored a paper on the efficacy of voluntary versus court-ordered services in child welfare practice.

- Betsy Gross and Dana Allen, Project Coordinators

Betsy Gross served as Project Coordinator during the first 4 months of the Project, prior to accepting alternative employment. Ms. Gross had extensive experience in the field of child welfare training and service provision. Dana Allen served as Project Coordinator for the duration of the project. She has extensive experience in the development and implementation of independent living skills for both youth and adults. While employed as the Independent Living Program Coordinator for San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services in California, Dana served as chair of the ILP (Independent Living Program) Advisory Committee as well as for the Central California ILP Committee. She was an active member of the State ILP Advisory Committee. Dana also served as Director of the Independent Living Skills Program with YMCA Youth and Family Services in San Diego, California.

- Graduate / Research Assistants

Several graduate and research assistants were employed by the project during its' duration. These assistants were students working towards obtaining their Master's Degree in Social Work from San Diego State University. They assisted with the project 10-20 hours a week.

- Administrative Assistant

Janette Diaz and Cynthia Edwards were employed as Administrative Assistants. Both had extensive experience in the areas of office management and project assistance.

- Rita Luongo and Jessica Kettering, Budget Analyst

Both Rita Luongo and Jessica have significant experience in the management of complex budgets. As can be seen, the aforementioned group represents a wealth of notable qualifications that include research and publication expertise, macro-level social services administration, evaluative, independent living and child welfare expertise, extensive training and curricula development and involvement in many notable professional organizations and committees.

4. Plans for collaborating with other agencies/organizations (numbers and characteristics of collaborating partners, roles and responsibilities).

While primary responsibility for development of the curriculum rested with project staff from The Academy for Professional Excellence, a project of the San Diego State University School of Social Work, the STAR Project was a collaborative effort among key partners. Consultants from various entities, including Casey Family Programs, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, the Southern Indian Health Council, and the California Community College Foundation were involved in content development. An Advisory Group, which included the consultants names above and the San Diego's Children's Initiative, a local group home, foster parents, former foster youth, Community College Personnel, a Juvenile Court Attorney, a Juvenile Court Judge, met on a bi-monthly (for the first half of the project) and quarterly (for the second half of the project). The STAR Advisory Group not only provided an essential function as advisors and community stakeholders, but also assisted with the creation of supportive networks in which to conduct the STAR Training.

As previously mentioned, five key partners collaborated on the project. They each played a unique and essential role in the successful implementation of the project. Some of their key responsibilities included:

Casey Family Programs assisted with research, focus groups, curriculum content development, participation on training team, and the Advisory Group. Casey was also a funding partner during the first and second year of the project.

San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) participated on the Advisory Group, provided information needed to interview 128 foster youth, and provided participants to take part in the training.

Southern Indian Health Council (SIHC) participated as members of the Advisory Group and took part in STAR Training.

Community College Foundation (Grossmont College Foster and Kinship Care Education), participated on the Advisory Group, provided staff assistance at trainings, and provided trainers. The Children's Initiative participated on the Advisory Group.

As part of the Academy for Professional Excellence, the STAR Project had access to a collaborative network of statewide child welfare training academies. As a result of this collaborative effort, STAR Training was offered, on a regional basis, throughout the State of California. The Regional Training Academies provided references to local stakeholders and also provided gratis training sites and logistical assistance.

Finally, due to the interdisciplinary nature of STAR Training, many agencies were called upon to take part in planning, coordination and implementation of STAR Training. These efforts not only paved the way for STAR in each region, but also created an opportunity for communities to take ownership of the STAR Training process.

5. Implementation outcome assessment: compare the actual project implementation with the planned project implementation and explain the reasons for change, if any. What were the barriers and facilitators to attaining implementation objectives? If new objectives (objectives not stated in the grant application) were developed during the program implementation, describe them.

The following tasks were outlined in the STAR Project Proposal. Except when noted (*), all tasks were successfully completed:

YEAR 1: In the first year of operations, the following tasks were accomplished:

- Develop MOU's with project partners (Casey Family Program, San Diego's Promise, Health and Human Services Agency, the California Community College Foundation and the Southern Indian Health Council)
- Recruit Advisory Group members
- Conduct focus groups among child welfare professionals to assess training needs in regard to working with older foster youth
- Conduct needs assessment from a random sample of 150 foster youth 16 and older

*The sample frame that we received from HHSA had so many incorrect addresses that we limited our sample to those youth with accurate addresses. Three hundred interviews were attempted, and 128 were completed.

- Collate and analyze data from focus groups and Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA)
- Develop training outline identifying proposed objectives, content areas, teaching strategies and learning outcomes, based on focus group and assessment input, and consultation from Partners, other experts and former foster youth
- Meet with Advisory Group to review and provide input on pilot curriculum outline
- Revise and complete detailed pilot curriculum draft based on Advisory Group input
- Recruit trainees
- Develop pre/post-tests and trainee satisfaction instrument for pilot training
- Develop training for trainers for pilot training
- Recruit and prepare trainers for pilot training phases

- Collect materials and develop a web-based listing of ILS resources and training bulletin board
- *ILS Resources were gathered, though due to changes in the structure of San Diego's Promise (the intended posting site), the information wasn't posted to the web until Year 3 of the Project.
- Provide training to initial pilot training groups
- Collate and analyze evaluation data and develop report
- Meet with Advisory Group to review and discuss training results and make recommendations for modifications
- Implement the first of the Resource Fairs

*Implemented as part of the Training for Service Providers

YEAR 2: In the second year of operations the following tasks were accomplished:

- Revise curriculum, training approach, training for trainers and/or evaluation tools based on experience and Advisory Group input
- Develop training curricula for Managers and Supervisors

*Development of the curricula began during the Year 2 and concluded during Year 3. This was due to an intensive focus on the creation and subsequent revision of a comprehensive, 3-day, interactive (including Teen Town/Teen Time) Training for Service Providers.

- Provide training to secondary pilot training groups. Conduct post-testing of initial trainees
- Provide Training for Trainers to Tribal Representatives and other interested persons

*It was decided to offer the Training for Trainers series during Year 3.

- Plan, schedule and implement four to ten Regional Resource Fairs

*These were conducted as part of the Training for Service Providers

- Provide manager training

*As previously mentioned, Training for Managers and Supervisors was delivered during Year 3.

- Provide Supervisor Training

*As previously mentioned, Training for Managers and Supervisors was delivered during Year 3.

- Collate and analyze evaluation data and develop report
- Revise curriculum, training approach and/or evaluation tools as needed
- Meet with Advisory Group to review and approve final curricula and review website content
- Revise training for trainers based on modifications in curricula
- Update website

YEAR 3: In the third year of operations, the following tasks were accomplished:

- Conduct post-testing of trainees
- Administer Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment tool as a post test

**The initial intent was to complete a comparative analysis using a quasi-experimental design that assessed differences in pre and post-test scores between those youth whose workers participated in the training and those whose workers did not. We had considerable difficulty recruiting our sample. The sample frame that was provided by HHSA was frequently inaccurate, and we doubted that we would be able to locate the same youth. Therefore, we did not pursue this follow-up.*

- Collate and analyze evaluation data and develop report
- Meet with Advisory Group to review and discuss training results and make recommendations for modifications
- Provide training to other Academy training groups
- Provide Training for Trainers as designated by each of four California Academies
- Conduct 12 month posttesting of trainees
- Collate and analyze evaluation data and develop report
- Meet with Advisory Group to review and discuss training results and make recommendations for final report
- Develop final evaluation report and journal article

Several facilitators to attaining the project objectives were noted during the project's implementation. The main facilitators include: an existing framework within the Academy for Professional Excellence to develop and facilitate training and professional development, involvement with an established Statewide collaborative of training academies, a supportive Advisory Group and established rapport between project staff and Statewide child welfare leaders. Due to efforts to train an interdisciplinary group on a regional level, it was necessary to gather a comprehensive listing of interdisciplinary representatives in each community. This proved to be a

task requiring a significant amount of time, detail work and outreach. We found that many communities did not have organized collaborative groups and it was, therefore, somewhat challenging to gather comprehensive community information. However, this potential barrier was overcome, as is evident by the number of trainees that participated in each STAR Training.

6. “Lessons learned” with respect to project implementation (e.g. If you were starting the project over, what would you do differently and what would you keep the same? Why?)

If given the opportunity to implement the same project again, we would do the following the same:

- Create a training package consisting of training for: service providers, managers & supervisors and trainers
- Provide training to an interdisciplinary training group
- Post training package to the web
- Have an interdisciplinary Advisory Group
- Provide Teen Town (this was helpful in breaking through stereotypes of each profession-it would be difficult to accomplish this during any other 3 hour format)
- Utilize two trainers for each STAR Training
- Design of Training for Trainers was effective in equipping trainees with the curricula
- Involve youth in every phase of the project
- Partnering with agencies within each community to garner support and resource for training provision

The following represent changes that we would recommend in any subsequent project:

- Provide training to groups consisting of no more than 50 participants (versus groups of 70 as occurred in some STAR Training)
- Review MOU's with partners on an annual basis
- Develop an improved strategy for dealing with counties with regional systems of care (it was often difficult to orchestrate a county-wide focus on the task at hand)
- Provide additional technical assistance with communities following training
- Provide Training for Managers and Supervisors prior to offering the Training for Service Providers

III. OUTCOME EVALUATION

1. Statement of participant outcome objectives: statement of the project's participant outcome objectives as stated in the grant application. The changes in participants/communities/service systems that were expected to occur as a result of the project as a whole or specific project components. Examples of outcome objectives include: increased knowledge and skill in the delivery of independent living services, improved coordination of state and tribal independent living services, etc.

We anticipated benefits to occur at the following three different levels as a result of development of this curriculum and provision of training to child welfare staff:

1) Direct Impact on Youth. As a result of child welfare professionals' increased competence in this area, there will be an increase in the number of youth emancipating from foster care in the

five Southern California Counties who have a continuing relationship with a supportive adult; who have a safe and stable place to live, and who are employed or in educational programs contributing to the development of marketable skills.

*A Needs Assessment was completed during Year 1 of the Project. Due to inability to locate the same youth during Year 3, the follow-up assessments were not administered. Based on the findings from the pre-post tests administered to those working with the youth, we can assume that improved services are being provided to youth.

2) Impact on Professional Skills. This training will result in improved professional competency in identifying youth' strengths and needs in independent living skills, and in addressing the needs of the older foster youth population. Each trainee will complete a pre-test at the onset of training, and post-tests at the completion of training and at six-month intervals during the year following training.

*The impact on professional skills was measured by the administration of pre-post tests to training participants.

3) Impact on Organizational Practice. This training will result in improved collaboration with partners in the identification and provision of services to foster and former foster youth. Assessments of current and on-going collaborative activities and identification of partners will be included as part of the pre- and post-tests.

*The impact on professional skills and organizational practice was measured by the administration of pre-post tests to training participants. Results show managers, supervisors, and trainees reported higher mean scores on both scales at post-test than they had scored at pretest on both the knowledge test and perceived competency scale. Change is statistically significant for both tests. This change means that managers reported they had increased their knowledge about independent living programs as a result of the training. Their higher scores at post-test on the perceived competency portion meant they felt more able to practice with youth after participating in training than they had prior to training. A follow-up posttest was conducted six months following the training session. The follow-up indicates that almost all respondents reported upon their training experience positively in terms of how it increased their ability to deliver ILS. Because trainees were contacted 6 months after training only a small group of participants were contacted.

Summary of the Evaluation Findings

- Participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the training
- Participants for the most part were able to demonstrate an increased knowledge of factors pertaining to ILS practice
- Participants perceived the training increased their competence for ILS practice
- Trainees continued to report gains from their participation in the training 6 months after the conclusion of training

2. Participant outcome assessment: Discuss how effective was the project in attaining each of its participant objectives and any variables associated with the attainment of each outcome objective.

Data gathered from pre-post tests suggests that the project was effective in impacting professional skills and organizational practice. Due to the inability to conduct follow-up assessments in Year 3 on the same foster youth as was conducted during Year 1, data is not available on youth outcomes. However, data gathered from the trainees would suggest that service delivery improved as a result of STAR Training.

3. “Lessons learned” relevant to participant outcome objectives. This could include program related lessons learned regarding attainment of participant outcome objects. It also could include evaluation lessons learned regarding outcome evaluations of this type of project.

Evaluative lessons learned include:

- Self-reporting on knowledge tests administered showed that participants perceived themselves as being more effective as a result of the training. These findings held true at follow-up.
- Evaluation was limited because resources were limited. In order to more firmly establish the effect of the training, greater financial allocation would need to be administered.
- It was consistently difficult to locate the youth based on the information given from San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency.
- Conducting the customer satisfaction evaluation following each training was an effective method by which to ensure that the training presentations were of quality and met trainee needs.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND EVALUATION

Recommendations should be based on evaluation results and lessons learned.

Creating a training program that incorporates training for both the line workers and the managers and supervisors is an effective way in which to begin to impact system change. A comprehensive, competency-based training program for line workers can focus on improving practice skills, while the training for supervisory staff addresses issues related to larger policy considerations and on-going supervision.

Incorporating youth into the program planning and implementation of the services that directly affect them should be integrated into all programs aimed at improving youth outcomes. While many programs aim to positively affect youth outcomes, few truly follow youth development principles.

It is recognized that in order to fully realize the affect that this or any other training program has on improved service delivery, and resulting improvements of youth outcomes, a significant allocation of resources, both monetary and logistical, would be necessary. Evaluation is limited when resources are limited. In order to more firmly establish the effect of the training, greater financial allocation would need to be administered.

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- Telephone conversation with California Department of Social Services ILP Analyst, Lupe Humphrey, June 2000.
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Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness (STAR) Final Report

Attachment Index

Attachment A	STAR Training Overview
Attachment B	STAR Interdisciplinary Training Participants

Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness (STAR) Interdisciplinary Training FINAL REPORT

Attachment A

STAR Training In coordination with the Academy for Professional Excellence	DESCRIPTION/GOALS	TARGET AUDIENCE	FORMAT
Training for Service Providers	STAR is a comprehensive, competency-based, <u>interdisciplinary</u> curriculum designed to impact practice and policy in child welfare, leading ultimately to improved outcomes for youth leaving foster care. As a result of this training, the following benefits are anticipated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct impact on youth ▪ Impact on professional skills ▪ Impact on organizational practice *This is further defined in the STAR brochure	Child welfare professionals, foster/kinship parents, group home staff, educators, employment service providers, probation officers, Indian service staff, Independent Living contract providers, and others involved in working with foster youth.	Three (1)-day training sessions (18 hours). Curriculum focuses on three levels of care (macro, mezzo, micro) and includes such topics as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising and protecting youth ▪ Youth development philosophy ▪ Teen Town / Teen Time ▪ Interdisciplinary collaboration ▪ Cultural competence ▪ Developmental tasks and issues of adolescents in foster care ▪ Interdisciplinary roles ▪ Assessment
Training for Managers and Supervisors	Training for Managers and Supervisors addresses issues related to larger policy considerations and on-going supervision (e.g. integration of independent living work with all other aspects of the social work job)	Supervisors and managers of child welfare professionals, foster/kinship parents, group home staff, educators, employment service providers, probation officers, Indian service staff, Independent Living contract providers, and others involved in working with foster youth.	Six hour training session covering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising and protecting youth ▪ Youth development philosophy ▪ Realities of foster care ▪ Community realities and collaboration ▪ Community strategic planning ▪ Next steps: how to work with staff to make a positive change for foster youth in our community
Training for Trainers	Training for Trainers is designed to equip trainers of Independent Living skills service providers with the STAR Training Curricula (Training for Service Providers and Training for Managers and Supervisors)	Trainers of those who work with adolescent foster youth.	Ten hour training session (1 ½ day). Participants will be equipped with the following curricula: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ STAR Training for Service Providers ▪ STAR Training for Managers and Supervisors Special emphasis will be given to the trainer's role in supporting the paradigm shift from "protecting" to "protecting and raising" adolescents in the foster care system

STAR INTERDISCIPLINARY TRAINING PARTICIPANTS / FY 2000-2003

	<u>T for T</u> Pilot T for T	<u>3 day</u> PILOT	<u>T for T</u> 3 day T for T	<u>3 day</u> SD/ Imperial	<u>3 day</u> San Bernardino	<u>3 day</u> Orange	<u>3 day</u> Riverside	<u>T for M& S</u> SD/Orange	<u>T for T</u> Central	<u>T for T</u> Bay	<u>T for T</u> LA Area	<u>T for T</u> Southern	<u>T for T</u> Northern	TOTAL	% of Total Partic.
DATE	July 30, 2001	Sept. 9,11,25, 2001	Jan.31, 2002	March 19-21, 2002	July 9, 16,23, 2002	July 31, Aug. 7, 14, 2002	August 21,28, Sept. 4, 2002	Jan. 22, 2003	Mar. 26-26 & 27-27, 2003	April 9-10, 2003	May 6-7, 2003	May 28-29, 2003	June 4-5, 2003		
Public Child Welfare Staff	1	24	2	20	39	34	28	14	5/13	15	12	10	9	226	44.5
Private-Non Profit	1	20	1	14	13	19	15	5	4/4	4	1	0	9	110	21.6
Care Provider	0	10	1	24	14	12	27	8	1/0	0	0	7	0	104	20.5
Other Publicly funded Personnel	3	4	1	8	7	4	4	0	5/0	8	8	5	10	67	13.2
Total # of Participants	5	58	5	66	73	69	74	27	15/17	27	21	22	28	507	100%

Academy for Professional Excellence

Health and Human Services

A county-university partnership meeting training and organizational development needs

December 18, 2003

Cathy Overbaugh
National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information
C/o Caliber Associates
10530 Rosehaven Street
Fairfax, VA 22031

Dear Cathy-

Enclosed, please find the following final documents for the Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness (STAR) Training Project (90CT0063/01,02,03).

The curricula has been posted to our website (<http://pcwta.sdsu.edu>) and is available to download for FREE. At this time, materials created by this project will be available via download to our website, or by contacting our project directly. These items will then be duplicated for a nominal fee.

Please note that documents on the enclosed CD-Rom have been created in Word. Please contact me directly with any questions regarding our curriculum.

Sincerely,



Dana Allen
STAR Training Coordinator
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School of Social Work
College of Health and Human Services



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December 13, 2003

Ms. Ruthenia Hopkins
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
330 C. St., S.W., Room 2070
Washington, D.C. 20447

Dear Ms. Hopkins,

Accompanying this letter, please find the Final Performance Report for the Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness (STAR) Project (#90CT0063/01,02,03).

The development and implementation of the STAR Training Project was a success. Hundreds of interdisciplinary service providers received comprehensive, competency-based training. The attached report attests to the details of the project's effectiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this endeavor. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

Anita H. Harbert, Ph.D.
Director
School of Social Work
San Diego State University

cc: Pamela Johnson, Don Dudley, Dana Allen, Rita Luongo, Irene Becker,
Steve Vasquez